

Message Text

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63

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

AID-20 EB-11 OMB-01 RSR-01 /122 W

----- 116829

R 172002Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WAHDC 5542

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

CINCLANT

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 1008

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, TD

SUBJECT: POLITICAL STIRRINGS IN T&T

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

SUMMARY: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS APPEAR TO PRESAGE EARLY END TO
COMPARATIVE DORMANCY IN POLITICAL SITUATION HERE. END SUMMARY.
DEVELOPMENTS OVER PAST MONTH HAVE INJECTED NEW ELEMENTS
INTO AN ENLIVENED POLITICAL SITUATION IN TRINIDAD:

A. A LEADING MEMBER OF RULING PNM HAS IN EFFECT MOVED
PUBLICLY TO ACCRETE PERSONAL POWER, PREDICTABLY INCURRING
THE RESISTANCE OF PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS. ATTORNEY-
GENERAL HUDSON-PHILLIPS ANNOUNCED HE WILL CONTEST
ELECTION FOR PNM CHAIRMANSHIP IN GENERAL ATTACK ON AGING
PARTY ESTABLISHMENT (WILLIAMS EXCEPTED). WILLIAMS
PUBLICLY DENOUNCED HUDSON-PHILLIPS' PLANS TO CONDUCT
A US-STYLE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN AND HAS MOVED IN PARTY
CIRCLES TO DISCREDIT HIM. ALTHOUGH HUDSON-PHILLIPS MAY
WELL BE BLOCKED, HE HAS TRIGGERED THE INEVITABLE
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INTRA-PNM JOCKEYING FOR POSITION WHICH WE BELIEVE WILL

INCREASINGLY CHARACTERIZE THE TWILIGHT OF WILLIAMS' REIGN.

B. THE NUFF "GUERRILLAS IN THE HILLS" HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT THEY CAN ACT WITH IMPUNITY IN HIT AND RUN ATTACKS ON GOVERNMENT INSTALLATIONS. FAILURE OF GOTT SECURITY FORCES TO TRACK THEM DOWN REFLECTS SOME PUBLIC UNWILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH GOTT.

C. THE "PROTECTIVE SERVICES" HAVE BEEN SHAKEN BY RENEWED POLICE-REGIMENT ANTAGONISM SPARKED BY THE KILLING OF A REGIMENT LIEUTENANT BY A POLICE OFFICER AND BY CONTINUED TENSION BETWEEN DEFENCE FORCE COMMANDER, BRIGADIER SERRETTE, AND THE COAST GUARD (WHICH REPORTEDLY HAS NOW BEEN REMOVED FROM HIS CONTROL). DELAY IN REPLACEMENT OF RETIRING POLICE COMMISSIONER BERNARD HAS HINDERED POLICE EFFORTS TO SORT OUT THEIR INTERNAL PROBLEMS.

D. PRO-GOTT ELEMENTS OF LABOR CONGRESS HAVE MOVED WITH ESSENTIALLY "POLITICAL STRIKES" TO PROJECT A MORE MILITANT IMAGE IN AN APPARENT TWO-PRONGED EFFORT TO (A) REFURBISH TTLC CREDIBILITY AS SPOKESMEN FOR LABOR AND (B) DENY LABOR BACKING TO THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION.

E. PRIME MINXISTER WILLIAMS HAS, IF ANYTHING, STRENGTHENED HIS OBSESSION WITH "FOREIGN INTERFERENCE" AND THE "INCREASING TREND TOWARDS COLONIALISM IN THE ENTIRE CARIBBEAN." IN PARTICULAR, HE CONSIDERS HIMSELF VINDICATED BY THE DEROULET TESTIMONY. IN SCARCELY VEILED TERMS HE HAS CRITICIZED PRESIDENT NIXON OVER WATERGATE AND THE CAMBODIA BOMBING AND HAS IMPLIED POSSIBLE US SUPPORT FOR HUDSON-PHILLIPS.

F. GOTT HAS MOVED TO STRENGTHEN TIES WITH CUBA THROUGH INITIALLING OF AIR AGREEMENT (SEPTTEL) AND PLANS TO EXCHANGE DELEGATIONS IN VARIOUS FIELDS, WHILE PRIME MINISTER APPEARS TO BE ZEROING IN ON PUERTO RICO AND US VIERGIN ISLANDS FOR PARTICULAR ATTENTION.

G. THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION HAS NOW PUBLICLY
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ANNOUNCED THAT ITS REPORT AND DRAFT NEW CONSTITUTION WILL LIKELY BE OUT BEFORE YEAR'S END. INEVITABLE LEAKS AND SPECULATION RE SUCH KNOTTY ISSUES AS PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION, AS WELL AS PRESUMPTION THAT ELECTIONS WILL BE RESULT (PROBABLY AS FORM OF EX POST FACTO REFERENDUM ON NEW CONSTITUTION AS ADOPTED), CERTAINLY SHOULD HEIGHTEN POLITICAL STIRRINGS IN THE LAND. THESE NEW ELEMENTS SHOULD BE VIEWED AGAINST CURRENT

PUBLIC MALAISE, OCCASIONED LARGELY BY RISING PRICES BUT
REFLECTING ALSO DISSATISFACTION WITH THE DECLINE IN THE
QUALITY OF LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICES HERE. ALL IN ALL
TRINIDADIAN'S ARE BECOMING EXPECTANT OF SOME CHANGES OF PACE
AND/OR POLICIES IN THEIR BUMBLING GOVERNMENT.
MARSHALL

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